

# The Palace

TRYON PALACE HISTORIC SITES & GARDENS

*A  
Season  
of  
Giving*



# The spirit of Christmas

Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens extends the spirit of Christmas to the community by presenting "Centuries of Celebrations" from Nov. 30 through Dec. 31. Daily tours and festivities are accented by holiday decorations in Tryon Palace and four historic homes. A parent/child period ornament workshop on Saturday, Dec. 1 gives families an opportunity to craft their own historic Christmas tree ornaments.

On Saturday, Dec. 8 and 15, wonderful performers from across the region arrive to give visitors two fantastic nights of 18th-century entertainment for our Christmas Candlelight Tours 5-9 p.m.

Inside the Palace, the famous Baroque dancers and harried housekeepers keep the spirit of the Palace lively as the party to celebrate King George III's birthday is in full swing.

Outside, we are delighted to once again have "Signora Bella, the Great Italian Equilibrist," balancing and juggling on the rola bola, slackrope and large sphere. This year she shares the big tent with "Otto the Sword-swallower." He will actually swallow real swords right before your eyes and consume fire as it were taffy. The colorful and musical African-American holiday tradition of Jonkonnu gets underway at 6 and 8 p.m. both nights.

Throughout our Candlelight evenings you will experience dance and drums, stories and songs, crisp air and warm fires. A craft area for children allows them to make and take items from times long past. Enjoy the company of good friends and New Bernians from past and present as the candlelight evenings conclude with spectacular firework shows.

For more information, check out our calendar section or click on our website at [www.tryonpalace.org](http://www.tryonpalace.org). ❖

*By Lisa Wimpfheimer and Vina Hutchinson Farmer*



## The Palace

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*The Palace* is published four times a year by the Tryon Palace Council of Friends to provide information about and build support for Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Send correspondence to Vina Hutchinson Farmer, Editor, *The Palace*, P.O. Box 1007, New Bern, NC 28563. Telephone: 252-514-4936. Fax: 252-514-4876. E-mail: [vfarmar@tryonpalace.org](mailto:vfarmar@tryonpalace.org).

For more information about Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, click on our website at [www.tryonpalace.org](http://www.tryonpalace.org) or call 252-514-4900, 800-767-1560.

### On the cover:

Historical dancers are only one highlight of the Christmas celebration awaiting visitors to our Candlelight tours. Enjoy a podcast about the Craven Historical Dancers which is available on our website at [www.tryonpalace.org](http://www.tryonpalace.org). Photo courtesy of Dolly Sickles.



# *Twas the Night Before ... A Cultural Revolution?*

By Diana Bell-Kite

**W**hen you visit Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens this holiday season, make sure your itinerary includes spending a few minutes in the George Dixon House. Not only will the house be decorated in a style reminiscent of the 1830s, but you will also learn about the origins of our modern Christmas traditions. Unlike the Colonial Christmas celebration unfolding in the Palace, modern visitors will be able to draw many direct parallels between their own family celebrations and those practiced in the mid-19th century.

One poem that both propelled and embodied the development of our contemporary perceptions of Santa Claus and Christmas was Clement Clarke Moore's *A Visit from St. Nicholas*. But what social, economic, and cultural forces led Moore to craft the words that we still today associate so inextricably with Christmas Eve and Santa?

Historian Stephen Nissenbaum tackled this very question and unearthed some surprisingly revelatory answers. To better understand the context from which the poem germinated, Nissenbaum took a closer look at Moore himself and the social environment in which he crafted those famous verses.<sup>1</sup>

Clement Clarke Moore was a wealthy man. His rural Chelsea estate on southern Manhattan Island would, by the mid-19th century, develop into one of New York City's classiest neighborhoods. However, this development was but one signal of a major change facing the city and nation – one that troubled Moore and his peers.

A peak in immigration brought thousands of destitute Irish Catholics and other impoverished migrants – many of whom wandered the streets in search of employment, food or trouble – into the city. Moore and others in his social class found this development both upsetting and menacing.

Not only did the poor vagrants provide a constant, visible reminder of life's harsher realities, their presence proved potentially dangerous to the city's wealthier residents.

Unlike Moore, who celebrated the Christmas season quietly with friends and family, the newcomers preferred loud, outdoor merriment, complete with discordant music and plenty of liquid refreshment. Members of New York's gentry class worried that celebration could quickly degenerate into social protest and threaten their position atop the social hierarchy. Yet, many prominent New Yorkers remembered – albeit rather rosily – the bygone days when the holiday season signaled a time of paternalism and charity, when rich and poor shared together in worship and benevolence. New realities

*continued on page 12*



# Making more history

By Cheryl Arthur Kite, Director of Development

**State commits \$35 million:** With a \$35 million commitment in its 2007 budget, the North Carolina General Assembly has secured the opening of the North Carolina History Education Center!

After unexpected delays in the project, Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens leadership is saying with confidence, "It's going to happen now." Director Kay Williams reminisced that the project began with an idea in August 1997 and said, "It's great to have the dream coming together almost 10 years to the day from its beginning."

The state's \$20.7 billion budget includes \$35 million over three years for the Center and, when added to its previous funding and private funding, will assure the construction of the Center in time for New Bern's 300th anniversary in 2010.

The state's commitment to the \$60.6 million project brings its total to \$42.7 million, with first funding being used for purchase of the Barbour Boat Works site, master planning and site preparation. The City of New Bern and Craven County have generously stepped forward with \$1.5 million and \$1.3 million respectively. Other public grants include \$1 million from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, \$1 million from Golden LEAF Foundation, \$147,000 from Save America's Treasures and \$75,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Harold H. Bate Foundation donates \$1 million:** The Harold H. Bate legacy in eastern North Carolina has made a giant stride with a \$1 million commitment for the North Carolina History Education Center.

The Harold H. Bate Foundation, created with Mr. Bate's estate in 2000,



*Bate Foundation board members Bob Mattocks (also chairman of the Tryon Palace Commission), Si Seymour, Benny Mullinix, Don Brinkley, Berleen Burnette and Director of Operations Joyce Hendricks join Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens Director Kay Williams in celebrating Harold Bate's legacy to eastern North Carolina. (Not pictured: Bate board member Gary Baldree.)*

is continuing his philanthropy and caring for the welfare of others with a gift for the Commons at the Center. "Although Mr. Bate was a modest and unassuming man, he was generous and far-sighted. It is very gratifying for the Bate Foundation board to award this gift that will honor Mr. Bate for years to come in his adopted home town," said Foundation President Don Brinkley.

Reflecting Mr. Bate's lifestyle, the Commons will cover an outdoor area of more than 10,000 square feet overlooking the Trent River. Containing an elevated courtyard surrounded by the U-shaped configuration of the Center, the Commons



*Harold H. Bate*

will extend over terraced levels to the edge of the wetlands where it will join a section of the New Bern River Walk. The courtyard will be surrounded by the glass walls of the great hall and of the pavilion that houses the riverside café, an exhibit gallery, and the museum shop; and the Pepsi Family Center. A retractable covering over the courtyard will allow the space to be used for all-weather events for large crowds.

The choice of "Commons" as the title is a tribute and reference to the various roles related to the Bate name in eastern North Carolina: a tract of land; a centrally-located spot to benefit and be used by the community as a whole; a gathering place in an educational institution; and a place for celebrations.

Harold Bate graduated from Cornell University in 1930 and worked for several

years with his family in New York, then in Wilmington, N.C., before moving to New Bern in 1964. He acquired and managed vast timberlands and eventually became a substantial investor on Wall Street.

A philanthropist, Mr. Bate established the J. Herbert Bate Distinguished Professorship of Medicine at University of North Carolina and was a significant supporter of East Carolina University, which named its General Classroom Building in his honor in 2001. He generously supported many local charitable organizations and was described as the "epitome of the citizen-servant, a resourceful businessman with a strong social conscience who, without fanfare, used his success as a foundation of good works and philanthropy."

***Making History Capital Campaign***  
**Update:** When the *Making History Campaign* began, it was thought to be an ambitious undertaking, even for North Carolina's premiere historic site. The campaign – originally planned for the History Education Center, Palace refurbishing and endowment – evolved into a \$60.6 million goal for the Center alone. Now, after unanticipated delays and challenges, the state's recent \$35 million and the generosity of other public and private donors are turning aspirations into brick and mortar, collected history and artifacts, and landscaping.

Already on a well-defined schedule,

Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens staff is working fervently to get ready. Meetings with the architects and designers are honing details, and staff members are researching and preparing material for exhibits. This summer, spartina grass was planted to rebuild native wetlands.

The successful progression of the campaign can be directly attributed to generous hearts, a lot of hard work and a refusal to give up. Board members of the Tryon Palace Commission and Council of Friends have committed \$6.4 million. Other significant private funding includes \$1 million from PepsiCo, \$1 million from the Harold H. Bate Foundation; a \$1 million endowment from the Robert P. Holding Foundation and First Citizens Bank; \$500,000 from the Cannon Foundation; and gifts from individuals ranging from \$1 million down. To fulfill the campaign target, additional revenues of \$2.7 million will be realized from 2006-2010 Tryon Palace ticket sales. The remaining balance of \$6.2 million will be raised over the coming months with major gifts and with a general public campaign beginning in 2008 designed to provide appealing gift opportunities for all North Carolinians.

Other aspects of the *Making History Capital Campaign* have received \$850,000 from the Kellenberger Historical Foundation, \$250,000 from the Wachovia Foundation and \$175,000 from the Thomas B. and Robertha K.

Coleman Foundation. Critical leadership for the campaign's funding development has been provided by Bob Mattocks and Karen Rand, Tryon Palace Commission chair and co-chair; David L. Ward Jr., Tryon Palace Council of Friends president; and Commission and Friends board members.

The North Carolina History Education Center is scheduled to open during New Bern's 300th anniversary in 2010. It will encompass 48,000 square feet on six acres adjacent to the Palace gardens and Trent River, with two major museums, a performance hall, a rotating exhibit gallery, other educational and conference spaces, and a waterfront exhibit and event area. The project's \$60.6 million budget, as approved by the North Carolina Department of Administration, includes site work, building construction, movable equipment, exhibits and contingencies. The Center's great hall and orientation area will become the new entry and introduction to Tryon Palace's complete sites and gardens.

As a green project, the Center will filter run off from approximately 40 acres of downtown New Bern, feature a cistern to recycle storm water runoff for landscape irrigation and utilize recycled building materials. For more information about the Center, contact the Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens Development Office at 252-514-4956 or email [ckite@tryonpalace.org](mailto:ckite@tryonpalace.org). ❖



*The North Carolina History Education Center.*



# Planting now for next spring

By Lisa Wimpfheimer, Horticulturist

## Q: Can I prune in the fall?

A: It's always beneficial to remove dead, damaged or diseased wood by pruning. But remember, pruning also stimulates new growth. And this could mean new shoots appearing as the first frost hits – not good. To shape shade and fruit trees, winter is a better time to prune, as you can see all the branches and the tree is dormant.

## Q: Why does my grass turn a yellow brown color over the winter?

A: Because it's sleeping. All plants have a time of growth and a time of rest or dormancy. Here in eastern North Carolina, warm season turf grasses, such as Bermuda grass, Centipede, Zoysia and St. Augustine grass, grow best during our long, hot summers. But as the soil temperature cools, the grass slows in growth and goes dormant.

But if you really want a green lawn to mow year round, that is certainly possible. "Overseeding" is the term for planting cool season grass seed in the fall on top of your primary grass that is going dormant. This process requires careful management, to prevent the winter grass from becoming a weed.

## Q: What can I plant now that blooms in early spring?

A: Now is the best time to plant trees, shrubs or bulbs now for a beautiful spring display. My favorite spring flowering trees are Red Buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*), Fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) and Carolina silver bell (*Halesia carolina*). These are all native trees that grow well in full sun and grow to a lovely 20 to 30 feet tall.

Many cool season flowers, such as snapdragons, pansies, forget-me-nots and Johnny jump-ups, can be planted now for early spring color.

You can find a wide selection of plants at our Fall Heritage Plant Sale 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 12-13. At the sale, you can select many lovely plants for your home landscape and tour our gardens free of charge. The chrysanthemums and butterfly gardens will be full of blooms



*Plant Red Buckeye now for a beautiful spring display.*

and provide a perfect photo opportunity.

As a Council of Friends member, you can attend our Preview Sale on Thursday, Oct. 11 from 5-6:30 p.m. to get first choice of the plants grown in the Tryon Palace greenhouse. Be sure to bring your Friends membership card.

Happy Gardening! ♦

*Lisa Wimpfheimer, horticulturist and head of the Garden Services Branch at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, directs the planting and care of the site's 14 acres and is a plant pest consultant.*



**Ongoing through March 2008:** *Days of Jubilee: African Americans and the Reconstruction Era in Eastern North Carolina* showcases images, artifacts and first-person accounts in a fascinating exhibit in our Visitor Center. Admission is free. An audio tour also is available to accompany the exhibit. *Days of Jubilee* is funded by a grant through the Harold H. Bate Foundation.

## October

**Garden Hours:** Through Oct. 31, gardens open until 6 p.m. (Last ticket sold at 4:30 p.m.)

### Saturday, Oct. 6

#### Home School Day: Revolutionary War Camp Life

9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. \$10 for students, \$12 for adults.

*Home-school families enjoy interactive activities as well as tours of the Palace and three other historic homes in this popular event. Bring your picnic lunch and spend time immersed in the past. Activities are designed for school-age children; some activities have a minimum age requirement. Space is limited; pre-*



*Programs that do not require a materials fee are free to members of the Tryon Palace Council of Friends.*

## Enjoy our historical theatrics

Join Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens as we present the historic *Punch & Judy* puppet show and the 19th-century play *Box & Cox*. Our version of *Punch & Judy*, adapted for young audiences, brings the pair to America just before the American Revolution. In the delightful one-act British farce *Box & Cox*, hat maker Mr. Box and printer Mr. Cox discover mysterious things are happening in their London boardinghouse. What does their landlady, Mrs. Bouncer, know that they don't?

Our historic theatre programs are offered the first and third Saturday of each month. Admission is included with the purchase of a Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens two-day pass, unless otherwise indicated. For more information, call 252-514-4900 or click on our website at [www.tryonpalace.org](http://www.tryonpalace.org).

*registration and pre-payment required by Sept. 20. Call 252-514-4935 to register.*

### Thursday, Oct. 11

#### Council of Friends Preview Plant Sale

5-6:30 p.m. Palace Lawn (Council of Friends membership card required for admittance).

*The preview sale offers an opportunity for our wonderful supporters to have first selection of plants grown in the Tryon Palace greenhouse. The sale continues Friday and Saturday, Oct. 12-13.*

### Friday-Sunday, Oct. 12-14

#### MUMfest Weekend

Gardens open 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday. Free garden admission (interior tours require the purchase of a ticket). *Visitors will enjoy the beauty of thousands of chrysanthemums in the Palace gardens. Free garden tours will be given each day.*

### Friday-Saturday, Oct. 12-13

#### "Fall is for Planting" Heritage Plant Sale

9 a.m.-5 p.m. Palace Lawn. *Held in conjunction with our Mumfest weekend celebration, this plant sale offers visitors the opportunity to purchase unique, rare and historic plants for display in their*

*home gardens. Gardeners will be on hand to answer your planting questions. Come early for the best selection!*

### Sunday, Oct. 21

#### African American Historic Downtown Walking Tour

2 p.m. Meet in the Visitor Center. \$4 adults, \$2 students (reservations are required; call 252-514-4935).

*Learn about 300 years of African American history on a walking tour of New Bern's historic district. This tour lasts approximately 90 minutes and covers 16 blocks. This program has a minimum enrollment requirement of 10 people.*

### Thursday, Oct. 25

#### Special Lecture: The Stanly-Spaight Duel and Honor Culture in the Antebellum South

7 p.m. Visitor Center Auditorium. Free. *On Sept. 5, 1802, two prominent New Bern politicians, John Stanly Jr. and Richard Dobbs Spaight, met on the outskirts of town and fired four rounds at each other from their flintlock pistols. Spaight fell mortally wounded and died the next day. To modern audiences, dueling to the death makes little sense. However, in the Antebellum South the honor culture that permeated society made such behavior unsurprising. Come learn about the Stanly-*

*Spaight conflict, broader dueling trends, and southern honor culture from our former Curator of Interpretation, Diana Bell-Kite, now Associate Curator at the North Carolina Museum of History.*

## Friday-Saturday, Oct. 26-27

### Ghostwalk

Call the New Bern Historical Society at 252-638-8558 for tickets and more information regarding house tours. Ghostwalk ticket holders can get \$3 off regular admission to Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens.

*Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens celebrates Ghostwalk with these events:*

- *Ken Burns' documentary series The Civil War will be shown 5-9 p.m. Friday, Oct. 26 and 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27 in our Visitor Center.*

- *The Days of Jubilee: The Reconstruction Era in Eastern North Carolina exhibit, featuring the journey of African Americans from slavery to freedom, will be open 5-9 p.m. Friday, Oct. 26 and 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27 in our Visitor Center.*

- *Mingle with members of the NC 7th Regiment in their encampment on the New Bern Academy Green and learn about the lives of Civil War soldiers, 5-9 p.m. Friday, Oct. 26 and 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27.*

- *Hear stories of the Union occupation of New Bern from Union General Ambrose Burnside in the Hollister House, 5-9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 26-27. (Ghostwalk tickets required.)*



## November

**Garden Hours:** From Nov. 1 through Feb. 28, gardens open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Last ticket sold at 4:30 p.m.)

### Thursday, Nov. 8

#### Parlor Talk

Noon. Commission House Parlor. Free.

### Thursday, Nov. 15

#### African American Lecture: Reclaiming

### First-Class Citizenship: The African-American Struggle and Mobilization for Political Rights in New Bern, North Carolina (1948-1979)

7 p.m. Visitor Center Auditorium. Free. *Karen Medlin's research examines the ways in which African Americans in New Bern were able to rise above the restrictions on their voting rights prior to and after the Voting Rights Act of 1965, focusing on the efforts of the NAACP and the Craven County Voter's League. Medlin's research*

## Council of Friends Historical Movies Series

The Council of Friends Historical Movie Series this fall covers a range of literary and historical subjects. All movies are scheduled for 7 p.m. in the Visitor Center Auditorium. Admission is free.

**Tuesday, Oct. 2:** In director Tim Burton's 1999 version of Washington Irving's timeless tale of murder and intrigue, Johnny Depp stars as Ichabod Crane, a New York detective sent to the town of *Sleepy Hollow* to investigate a series of mysterious beheadings. Crane arrives in town to find that the superstitious locals believe the guilty party to be the ghost of the Headless Horseman (Christopher Walken).

**Tuesday, Nov. 6:** Set in 1607 at the founding of the Jamestown Settlement, Terrence Malick's beautifully-filmed adventure, *The New World*, highlights the love story between explorer John Smith (Colin Farrell) and Native American princess Pocahontas (Q'orianka Kilcher). As tensions build between English settlers and Native Americans, the two find that love may not be enough to overcome ancestral loyalty. Christian Bale and Christopher Plummer co-star.

**Tuesday, Dec. 4:** This 1999 version of *A Christmas Carol* is a spirited adaptation of Charles Dickens' immortal novel – and anything but bah, humbug! Patrick Stewart stars as Ebenezer Scrooge, a skinflint who faces the spirits of Christmas past, present and future and is given a chance to see the error of his ways one fateful Christmas Eve.

also analyzes the voting registration movement headed by the Voter's League and its philosophy, its relationship with the black and white communities, and its successes and failures.

## Sunday, Nov. 18

### African American Historic Downtown Walking Tour

2 p.m. Meet in the Visitor Center. \$4 adults, \$2 students (reservations are required; call 252-514-4935).

*Learn about 300 years of African American history on a walking tour of New Bern's historic district. This tour lasts approximately 90 minutes and covers 16 blocks. This program has a minimum enrollment requirement of 10 people.*

## Friday-Saturday, Nov. 23-24

### New Bern Occupied

9 a.m.-4 p.m.

*Join us for a Thanksgiving weekend at Tryon Palace with all the bounty that history has to offer. Travel back to Union-occupied New Bern and see how soldiers and civilians experienced the Thanksgiving holiday during a period of war and strife.*

# December

## Friday, Nov. 30-Monday, Dec. 31

### Centuries of Celebrations

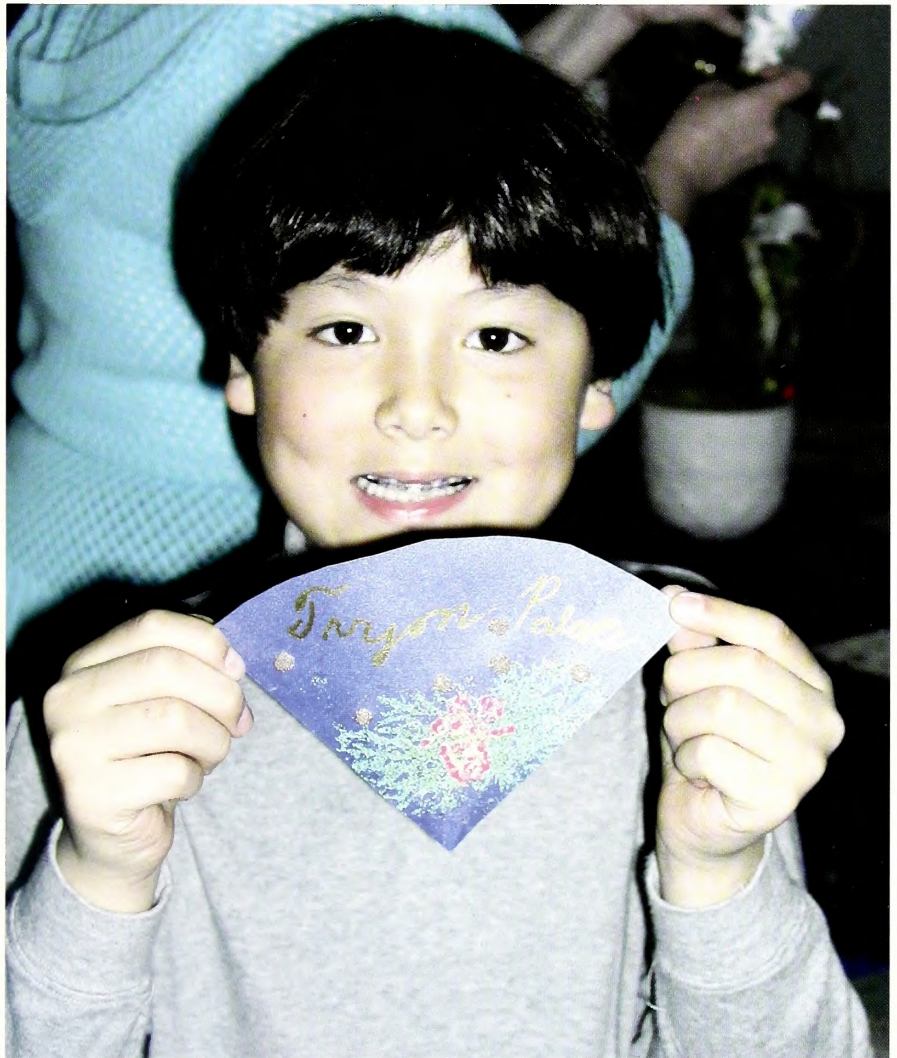
Call for hours.

*Daily tours and festivities are accented by holiday decorations in the Palace and four historic homes. Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens is closed Monday-Wednesday, Dec. 24-26 for the Christmas holidays.*

## Saturday, Dec. 1

### Saturday Sampler: Parent/Child Period Ornament Workshop

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. \$20 per person, materials fee included (reservations required by calling 252-514-4935).



*Come craft your own historic Christmas tree ornaments in this festive family workshop. This class size is limited to 12 people with a minimum age requirement of 10 years and a minimum enrollment of seven.*

## Saturday, Dec. 8

### Holiday Garden Walking Tour

10-11 a.m. Meet in the Visitor Center. \$4 adults, \$2 students.

*Enjoy a guided tour of the exterior decorations of the Palace and historic homes, led by gardener Eva O'Steen.*

## Saturdays, Dec. 8 and 15

### Christmas Candlelight Tours

5 p.m.-9 p.m. \$15 adults, \$6 students (tickets sold for specific tour time slots). *Step back in time for an unforgettable evening in colonial New Bern in 1770. Governor and Mrs. Tryon are hosting a "very grand and noble Entertainment and Ball" to celebrate the completion of the Palace and the birthday of King George III. The palace is illuminated and filled with elegant dancers, musicians and fascinating characters. Colonial entertainers perform on the Palace grounds; the African American tradition of Jonkonnu is recreated at 6 and 8 p.m. at the Palace gates. The grand finale of the evening is a spectacular fireworks show on the South Lawn. Come celebrate the holidays with us ... colonial style.*



## Coming up next season

• Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens is closed Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

• On Thursday, Jan. 17, Dr. Martha Hodes discusses **"The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story of Love, Race and War in the 19th Century"** at 7 p.m. in the Visitor Center Auditorium. Admission is



free. The first lecture in the 2008 African American lecture series focuses on

an ordinary woman who led an extraordinary life. Born white and poor in New England, Eunice Richardson Stone Connolly married a black sea captain and moved to his home in the West Indies, where she lived for the rest of her life. This true story of misfortune and defiance takes up grand themes of American history, opportunity and racism, slavery and war, equality and freedom.

• Girl Scouts of all ages enjoy **Scouting Out Tryon Palace** for a fun-filled day of history on March 1 featuring tours of the Palace and three other historic homes, take-home projects, Colonial games and hands-on activities. Girl Scout leaders should call 800-558-9297, ext. 118, by Feb. 15 to register.



• **"The Long Black Song of Carter G. Woodson in the Unfinished Opera of Multiculturalism,"**

presented by Dr. David

Anderson, is the subject of the African American Lecture Series 7 p.m. March 20 in our Visitor Center Auditorium.

• Check out our website at [www.tryonpalace.org](http://www.tryonpalace.org) for more calendar information.

*Programs that do not require a materials fee are free to members of the Tryon Palace Council of Friends.*

## Decorative arts symposium celebrates 40th

The Decorative Arts Symposium at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens celebrates its 40th anniversary March 28-30, 2008 with the topic of "Borrowed, Invented and Stolen: Celebrating the Decorative Arts in America."

Nancy Richards, Curator of Collections, said, "Throughout our history American artisans and craftsmen have looked to the old world for design inspiration. Aided by artifacts imported from Europe and the Orient, they copied and adapted forms and decorative designs which appealed to American consumers. 'Borrowed, Invented & Stolen: Celebrating the Decorative Arts in America' looks at these links in a variety of objects including furniture, silver, ceramics and floor coverings."

Keynote speakers for the weekend symposium include:

- J. Thomas Savage, Director of Museum Affairs, Winterthur Museum
- Sarah B. Sherrill, Editor, *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, The Bard Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture in New York City
- Suzanne Findlen Hood, Assistant Curator of Ceramics and Glass, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
- Beth Carver Wees, Curator of American Decorative Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York
- Patrick Lee Lucas, Department of Interior Architecture, UNC-Greensboro

The symposium has been a long tradition at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, bringing together scholars, collectors, students and others to view aspects of the decorative arts and their social implications. Its subjects over the last 40 years have covered a wide range – from the people, places and objects important to Tryon Palace and New Bern to the roles of North Carolina, Virginia and other states in American history.

For more information or to request a brochure, contact Karen O'Connell at 252-514-4933 or e-mail [koconnell@tryonpalace.org](mailto:koconnell@tryonpalace.org). The symposium is co-sponsored by the Tryon Palace Commission and the Department of Architecture at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. ♦

# Volunteer for the holidays

By Fran Campbell, Volunteer Coordinator

**T**ryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens staff and volunteers are busy planning and finalizing fall and winter programs – and volunteers are always needed to ensure the continuing success of what we have to offer.

**Gardening:** Fall is a busy time in the gardens as we prepare for Mumfest weekend and the Fall Heritage Plant Sale. As mums fade, volunteers are needed to plant tulips and pansies that will grace our Tryon Palace gardens in the spring.

**Holiday decorating schedule:** Boxwood picking is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 19 and Tuesday, Nov. 20. Shifts are 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 1-4 p.m. Installation of exterior decorations takes place Monday, Nov. 26 and Tuesday, Nov. 27 at 8 a.m. This requires a lot of walking, toting and standing. To register for either or both, call Lisa Wimpfheimer at 252-514-4926 or Fran Campbell at 252-514-4951.

**School bells:** Field trips bring thousands of school children to Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens throughout the school year. To ensure their visits run smoothly, School Group Assistants divide and move groups from place to place around the site. If you enjoy children and are willing to work outside one or two hours, mornings or afternoons, consider signing up for this important position that helps the Palace achieve its goal of providing a quality history education experience.

**Interpreters:** We are always in need of outgoing and engaging interpreters to take on the following roles.

- *In the Palace* – Interpreters in costume lead school and adult groups through the Palace and provide information about historic events and the decorative arts. This requires a great deal of walking, as well as the ability to climb stairs and speak clearly.

- *Characters* – Consider portraying an historical figure of the 18th and 19th centuries as one of our costumed character interpreters.

- *Crafts interpreters* – Historic craft interpreters offer visitors a glimpse of life in the 18th and 19th centuries through demonstrations of candle dipping (fall/winter only), weaving and basket-making.

- *New Bern Academy Museum* – The museum's new "Walk Around The Block" tour currently is a self-guided architectural tour of private homes around the block of the Academy. The houses are not open to the public. Brochures for the tour will be available at the Academy. With enough volunteer support, we would like to turn this into a guided tour. If you are interested in New Bern history and enjoy talking to new people, consider signing up for this new offering. ❖

To volunteer or for more information, call Volunteer Coordinator Fran Campbell at 252-514-4951 or email [fcampbell@tryonpalace.org](mailto:fcampbell@tryonpalace.org). Volunteer applications also can be found online at [www.tryonpalace.org/applicationvo.html](http://www.tryonpalace.org/applicationvo.html)



Youth volunteers of all ages are welcome at Tryon Palace. Ethan Riggs (top) staffs the George Street gate during a busy holiday weekend while seamstress Kristen Moffitt (bottom) helps keep our costumes in good shape. They are part of our new program designed to recruit a youth corps and join the nearly 225 volunteers already providing invaluable services to Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. Come join the team!



## A Cultural Revolution

*continued from page 3*

made this old paternalism obsolete, and for the wealthy, fear and guilt filled the void. Facing these new obstacles, Moore and his peers found in Christmas a solution—one built, however, on invented tradition.

New York was originally New Amsterdam – a Dutch colony. In their quest to quell social anxiety, Moore and his social club, the Knickerbockers, harkened back to the city's Dutch roots in an effort to give precedent for a more peaceful time of communal tradition. From this investigation emerged St. Nicholas and his practice of rewarding the well-behaved and punishing the disobedient.

Rather than the friendly, approachable Santa we know and love today, the Dutch St. Nicholas was a bishop, an imposing figure who annually enacted, as Nissenbaum writes, a “mini version of the Day of Judgment.”<sup>2</sup> Ironically, the Dutch who most readily celebrated St. Nicholas’ visits were Catholic; most of those who settled New York were not. St. Nicholas had never been a viable player in New York’s past. This mattered little, however, as he proved particularly useful in the present.

Clement Clarke Moore was not the only wealthy, 19th-century New Yorker to rouse St. Nicholas from his home in Holland. Washington Irving wrote extensively of St. Nick in his *Knickerbocker’s History of New York* and John Pitard printed his own broadsides featuring the saint. Still, Santa retained his ecclesiastical authority.

It was Moore who changed him from an imposing moral figure to the one we know today. In Moore’s *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, his portrayal of Santa, according to Nissenbaum, is a complete reverse of the pious figure formerly known. “Santa’s eyes ‘twinkle,’ his cheeks are ‘rosy,’ his dimples ‘merry,’ his mouth is ‘droll,’ his figure ‘chubby and plump,’ his manner ‘jolly.’ He is tiny – the size of an ‘elf.’”<sup>3</sup> Santa was also of the working-class. He resembled “a peddler just opening his pack,” and rather than wearing a bishop’s garb, he was “dressed all in fur.” He clenched “the stump of a pipe” – a marker of lower-class identity as opposed to the long pipes smoked by the gentry – in his teeth. In sum, Moore made Santa unthreatening; he presented him “as both a bishop and a worker – but without either the power of the one or the animosity of the other.”<sup>4</sup> But what did this portrayal mean for the gentry class of New York and how did it help them deal with new social pressures and dangers?

Clement Clarke Moore’s poem allowed New York’s upper classes to reconcile perceived tradition of Christmases past

– the idea of Christmas being a time of paternalistic generosity – with the new reality of a seemingly dangerous and populous lower class. Santa was a blue-collar visitor, not dissimilar to those who occasionally broke into posh gentry-class homes. However, St. Nick was no criminal, rather he “asks for nothing, and by implication his host owes him nothing.”<sup>5</sup> Unlike the working-class men and women whose very presence left the gentry guilt-ridden and afraid, this new Santa put readers in the mindset of “a grateful non-threatening old-style dependent.”<sup>6</sup>

It is no coincidence that the early 19th century saw Christmas transform from an adult holiday to one focused on children. Children were dependents of the wealthy, just like the poor; though, by bestowing yuletide favors on the young rather than the destitute, the holiday could be practiced within the home, safe from the dangerous multitudes. The new vision of St. Nicholas helped to complete this transformation. Moore “transfigured [Christmas] with a symbolic promise to release [the rich] from both the fear of harm and the pressure of guilt.”<sup>7</sup>

Moore’s poem marked a major cultural transformation in the urbanizing North. Influenced by expanding capitalism and immigration, the upper classes gradually relinquished their feelings of paternal obligation toward the poor. *A Visit from St. Nicholas* soothed this transition.

The poem proved significant on a greater scale however, as it transformed Americans’ Christmas traditions and perceptions of the “jolly old elf.” Even here in New Bern, where paternalistic relationships remained strong during the antebellum years – as they did throughout the slaveholding South – the vision of a benevolent yuletide visitor became an integral part of the Christmas season. So when you hang your stocking this year in anticipation of Santa’s nighttime visit, remember the man and the poem that transformed our collective imaginings of the season. ❖

*Diana Bell-Kite is the former Curator of Interpretation at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. She is now Associate Curator at the North Carolina Museum of History.*

### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup>Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas: A Cultural History of America’s Most Cherished Holiday* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996). The argument to follow is Nissenbaum’s entirely. I strongly suggest checking out this book if you are looking for both a good read and greater insight into our holiday traditions.

<sup>2</sup>Nissenbaum, 73.

<sup>3</sup>Nissenbaum, 78.

<sup>4</sup>Nissenbaum, 85.

<sup>5</sup>Nissenbaum, 84.

<sup>6</sup>Nissenbaum, 84.

<sup>7</sup>Nissenbaum, 87.



# Students participate in quilting tradition

In our spring 2007 issue of *Living History Classroom* (available on our website at [www.tryonpalace.org](http://www.tryonpalace.org)), we discussed African American experiences during the Reconstruction era and talked specifically about the strong tradition of quilting in the black community.

North Carolinians of many backgrounds have made quilts for hundreds of years. Some of these quilts serve a practical purpose – to provide warmth on a cold winter night. But many quilts are also made for more sentimental reasons. Often people make quilts to commemorate a special family event, like a wedding or birth. Quilts can be a type of family album, with symbols and words that tell a family's history. Some people even make quilts that celebrate special community, national or world events.

African Americans in North Carolina have a strong quilting tradition, with features unique from those of other ethnic groups. Strip patterns, large designs and improvisation are common in African American quilt patterns. Quilts made by African Americans often use bold, bright colors, especially red. In terms of material, many quilts made by African Americans use non-traditional and remnant fabrics. In modern quilts, the makers often consciously choose to use these elements as a sign of their African heritage; but in colonial times, they were usually incorporated unconsciously.

Quilts, of course, came in all designs and colors but many of the popular patterns that have been handed down include the Nine Patch, Grandmother's Flower Garden, Bear's Paw, Cat's Cradle, Log Cabin, Maple Leaf and Double Wedding Ring ... just to name a few! In the 19th century, it was popular to make up "sampler" blocks to trade with friends, a tradition that lives on among quilters today.

We asked students to make their own quilt squares, either of paper or fabric, that said something about their life and family. We were thrilled with the response from participating schools. Their quilts are now on display in our Visitor Center at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, and images of them are published in the Fall 2007 issue of *Living History Classroom*. Stop by to see these wonderful works of art. ❖



Ms. Cheryl Gourley's class from Magnolia Elementary in Lumberton created this colorful paper quilt.



Ms. Connie C. Butterfield's class from New Hope Elementary School in Wilson submitted four small quilts with blue borders. These two photos detail a few of the unique panels.



Ms. Joanne Madore Pipkin's class of North Ridge Elementary School in Raleigh submitted a quilt that incorporated significant words such as Escape, Sunshine, Excited, Chase, Lipstick and Yogurt Cake, among others.



## Our New Friends

Thank you and welcome to the following members who have joined the Council of Friends since May 16, 2007:

### SUSTAINER

Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Stallings IV, New Bern

### SPONSOR

Mr. and Mrs. Tony Wachob, New Bern

### FAMILY/GRANDPARENT

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Mr. Donald M. Lee, Wilmington

### STUDENT

Ms. Denise M. Colvin, Camp Lejeune

Ms. Sophia Colvin, Camp Lejeune

*For membership information, call Karen O'Connell at 252-514-4933.*



*Over 200 guests enjoyed this year's Gathering in the Gardens. The event raised \$5,725 for programs at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens.*

## Friends help fund new video

*By Karen O'Connell, Coordinator, Tryon Palace Council of Friends*

Thanks to generous grants from the Harold H. Bate Foundation and the Tryon Palace Council of Friends, we now have a new orientation video showing in our Visitor Center. It is a wonderful presentation produced by the Museum Services Branch at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. Please come by to see the video – a result of your support of the Council of Friends!

**MEMBERS-ONLY FALL TRIP:** This year the Council of Friends will sponsor a trip to Spain and Portugal as part of the ongoing Friends Travel Program. In October, tour leader Nelson McDaniel and 28 Council of Friends members depart New Bern for a 12-day adventure which includes visits to Lisbon, Seville, Madrid and many other places of interest. Participation in the Friends Travel Program is just one of the benefits of a membership in the Tryon Palace Council of Friends.

**GATHERING IN THE GARDENS:** Over 200 guests enjoyed fine food, beverage and entertainment at this year's Gathering in the Gardens, held in May. The Gathering, now in its third year, was once again a wonderful success, raising \$5,725 that will be used to support programs at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. Our thanks to the event chairman, Dr. Charles Deigert, committee members Kittye Bailey, Sissy Chesnutt, Debbie Deigert, Tom Dunton, Bob Eddings, Anita English, Paula Lindsay and Nancy Mansfield, our volunteer staff and the many vendors and entertainers who were so generous with their donations of food, beverages and talents. Your hard work was instrumental in making this another successful event.

**FALL PLANT SALE PREVIEW:** The "Fall is for Planting" preview sale for Council of Friends members is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 11. Bring your membership card and be ready when the gate opens at 5 p.m. The sale continues until 6:30 p.m. If you are not a member of the Council of Friends or have a friend who enjoys gardening, joining the Friends now so that you can participate in this event is well worth the membership fee.

**HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE:** The annual Holiday Open House/Christmas party will be Wednesday, Dec. 5. Please mark your calendar and plan to

join a host of Friends for this very special seasonal event.

**THE PERFECT GIFT:** It's not easy finding the perfect holiday gift, especially for that special someone who already has everything. This Christmas, consider giving that person a Tryon Palace Council of Friends membership, which features such benefits as annual admission, shop discounts, *The Palace* magazine, invitations to "Friends Only" events and free admission to lectures. Gift memberships also ensure that, through Council of Friends support, Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens will be able to continue offering fantastic programs and experiences for our many visitors. ❖

*For more information about membership in the Friends and the benefits associated with joining the Tryon Palace Council of Friends, contact Karen O'Connell at 252-514-4933 or [koconnell@tryonpalace.org](mailto:koconnell@tryonpalace.org).*

## History Bowl returns in 2008

Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens will host its Regional History Bowl Friday, Feb. 8, 2008 in the Visitor Center Auditorium. This will be one of nine regional history bowls held throughout North Carolina.

Open to eighth-grade teams from public and private schools around the state, the bowl is sponsored by the North Carolina Division of State Historic Sites and the Office of Archives and History, in partnership with local units and the North Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the North Carolina Museum of History and the Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies.

The competition is a challenging test of students' knowledge of state history, with a special emphasis on state historic sites. It has three main objectives:

- to reinforce the historical information learned in the classroom;
- to build good study habits in the individuals participating; and
- to develop sportsmanship and teamwork among the students.

The state championship bowl is held in May in Raleigh. Each regional bowl can only accommodate eight schools, so register early. For more information about the TPHS&G Regional History Bowl and to find out how to register, contact Katie Brightman at 252-514-4939 or [kbrightman@tryonpalace.org](mailto:kbrightman@tryonpalace.org). ❖



2007 winners from Murray Middle School, Wilmington



## Preserving North Carolina's historic heritage

You can help support Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens in its mission of preserving North Carolina's historic heritage with a membership in the Tryon Palace Council of Friends. A Council of Friends annual membership features such benefits as free general admission, shop discounts, *The Palace* magazine, invitations to "Friends Only" events, free admission to special programming and more. Your membership also ensures that through Council of Friends' support, Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens will continue to offer fantastic programs and experiences for our many visitors. More information about membership is available by calling Karen O'Connell at 252-514-4933, or emailing [koconnell@tryonpalace.org](mailto:koconnell@tryonpalace.org).

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- ☐ Associate, \$50
- ☐ Student, \$20

### Please send me information on the following:

- ☐ Donating objects
- ☐ Funding special projects
- ☐ Donating real property or securities
- ☐ Remembering Tryon Palace through bequests
- ☐ Corporate or institutional sponsors
- ☐ Capital campaign, North Carolina History Education Center



## *Gifts for this season and all year round*

Our shops now offer an exclusive array of custom items featuring Tryon Palace. These include fine porcelain pieces, prints and note cards by local artist Betty Brown and a 14K gold-flashed, full-color, three-dimensional cut out ornament from Jackson-Pacific. A view of the Palace from the front gate is presented on a ceramic saucer expressly made in Staffordshire, England and just received, an updated full-color wooden model depiction of the Palace facade by the famed Car's Meow Company. For the collectors on your holiday gift-giving list, consider our newly redesigned color lapel pin, sterling silver charm, thimble and spoon, all with wonderful renditions of North Carolina's first permanent capitol.



Blenko products return to our inventory selection with an additional line of unique vases and vessels. For over 100 years, Blenko Glass Company has maintained the tradition of handmade glass and is one of few original American glass companies in existence. We are proud to offer the ever popular Blenko water bottle/carafe in a variety of colors. Special orders on Blenko pieces are welcomed.

Stop by or shop on-line to appreciate all the Museum and Garden Shops have to offer, and remember, we provide free gift wrapping of all your purchases. Council of Friends members receive a 10 percent discount.

  
*Tryon Palace Council of Friends*  
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